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Preservation Education
In Service to the Community

CRM readers unfamiliar with how frequently historic preservation programs interact with the public may be pleasantly surprised by this issue. Although the image of an "ivy tower" still exists, the reality is that public service has always played a very important role in the preservation curriculum. Indeed, community service is an essential part of every student's activities and is repeatedly reinforced by fieldwork, and "real world" problem-solving exercises in other classes.

Although much of this learning takes place "close to home," in the immediate region around the educational institution, in recent years the range of possibilities being offered is expanding in two ways. First, more instructors are exploring a wider range of partnerships and cooperating agreements to support fieldwork and community service. Today the number of cooperating organizations embraces not only the National Park Service, but a whole range of federal, state, and local sponsors. Often this support is being sought from more than one source, and the cultural resources are both above and below ground. Second, in recent years the domestic orientation of several preservation programs has been increasingly supplemented with foreign study initiatives. Several preservation educators have designed opportunities that allow students to become involved with projects abroad to extend their knowledge of and practices in other contexts. This provides a richer educational experience and, hopefully, will promote greater understanding and compassion for cooperation in their future.

Regardless of the context, for most students, working with a community to examine its historic properties is the first opportunity to become involved in some aspect of the preservation process. It is an exciting course. More often than not, the field work component of the curriculum is one of the most time-consuming aspects, requiring a considerable amount of travel and an above-the-average amount of effort. For the community, seeing its cultural resources through different eyes provides an opportunity to alter the public agenda, saving cultural resources. In the following pages, 11 university programs demonstrate the tremendous amount of time and energy each has put into serving their communities, near and far.

Working with a broad constituency, the student begins to realize that understanding the past is but the first step in taking an active role in preservation. Maintaining and increasing the general understanding of preservation must remain a goal, for if it is forgotten, historic resources will be lost. In the opening essay, Prof. Richard Longstreth underlines the necessity of fieldwork as a vital and necessary element of preservation advocacy because any effort to protect and appropriately adapt historic resources is seldom, if ever, viable without substantial community support.

Prof. Bonnie Stepenoff demonstrates how a group of undergraduate students became actively involved with flood and fire ravaged communities in the Mississippi flood plain, working alongside volunteers in the heat and humidity. And she cites the testimonials of the internship supervisors to demonstrate the positive contribution that students can make. Dr. Stepenoff's graduate assistant, Renae Farris, highlights the summer field school in Ste. Genevieve where 10 students conducted archeological excavations and archival research, and began to unlock the mysteries of a two-story 19th-century farmhouse that contains a one-story French vertical log house. The field school was an interdisciplinary effort, involving students and faculty from Southeast Missouri State University and Murray State University (KY), in partnership with the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources, a regional archeological research consortium, the Middle Mississippi Survey, and personnel assistance from the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

Prof. Héctor Abreu-Cintrón, who teaches at the Savannah College of Art and Design, describes how the students from that institution surveyed their adopted community with an eye to providing a fresh perspective on what makes that city so significant. Going beyond the notion that it is the squares and the high style architecture that are worthy of notice, the SCAD students are examining the vernacular landscape anew, to facilitate both review and compliance and more comprehensive preservation planning.

Prof. Paul Shackel, at the University of Maryland, describes the partnership between his historical archeology program and the National Park Service, National Capital Region. Two projects at Manassas National Battlefield Park, the

Robinson House and the Sudley Post Office, demonstrate the manner in which student work can significantly assist in the interpretation of historic landscapes.

The mission statement of the land-grant institutions in each state also provides a springboard for historic preservation education to become dedicated to public service. At the University of Delaware, as Prof. David Ames demonstrates, a university "Center" is one means to gather funding from a land-grant institution that can be used to match other sources of state aid and local support to provide financial assistance for main street, disaster preparedness, advocacy, and recording threatened properties. The testimonials of two of his students reinforce the importance of securing this kind of financial aid and linking it to the curriculum.

At another land-grant institution, Prof. David Woodcock continues to lead the historic preservation students at Texas A&M University in its 20-year tradition of documenting historic structures to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Accurate recording is key to appropriate treatment of historic properties, whether in the small town in Texas, a community in the Caribbean, or a cathedral or abbey in France. And increasingly, electronic assistance and computer-aided drawing facilitate these efforts.

The opportunity to compare and contrast the social, economic and political conditions of a foreign country and see first hand how they affect preservation policy, programs, and various projects often places work in this country in a different perspective. England is a favorite for educational institutions on the East Coast, because the study of colonial history provides strong links to the "mother country" and it is relatively easy to understand the language and customs. In a manner similar to the foreign field study initiative of Texas A&M, several other preservation programs have initiated courses abroad. At the undergraduate level, field study in Roger Williams University's Semester Abroad Program has been led by Prof. Karen Jessup. Students in preservation and architecture have taken up residence in North Yorkshire, and, study is centered around studio courses, where teams are dedicated to documentation, conservation, and planning. They are assisted by the staff of English Heritage, The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and preservation architects.

The North Yorkshire estates and their landscapes also serve as the residence for the faculty at the University of South Carolina, which in alternative years offers a five-week summer course in England with a summer field school amidst the plantations in Charleston. Prof. Robert Weyeneth also describes the several domestic regional initiatives of his public history program: preservation projects related to African-American history, research projects undertaken related to preservation of Cold War sites, and the restoration of the capital building in Columbia.

If the ancient sites of Europe and the preservation practices there provide food for thought, those of the Far East are at least equally stimulating. Two faculty members have introduced field study in that part of the globe. Prof. Chester Liebs, founder of the historic preservation program at the University of Vermont, developed a highly unusual exchange by working with Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, whereby both groups of students worked together in the field in Japan and the United States. In this case partnerships involved with each of the three communities in which they worked, seeking to understand preservation challenges, recording their perspectives, analyzing the alternatives, and presenting their ideas in a public forum.

At the University of Hawaii, preservation program director Prof. William Chapman has long been aware of the cultures that influence historic preservation thinking in the Pacific Rim. His field school initiative in Southeast Asia is one of the most challenging for exploring booming third world cities, and the pressures they face.

Prof. William Bushong, who teaches the fieldwork course for the graduate students in historic preservation at Goucher College, presents some of the challenges of supervising documentation projects in widely dispersed areas of the country. Goucher's distance-learning program, the only one of its kind in the country, depends upon frequent communication via electronic mail and telephone to work with students in their communities, potentially anywhere on the globe. The public service being provided by these students in independent fieldwork projects is no less important in their curriculum.

How can this wide variety of examples be useful to you, the reader? By suggesting that now, with nearly 60 educational institutions supporting courses in historic preservation throughout the country, the opportunity for you to work with a nearby program has never been greater. Field courses, studios, assistantships, internships, individual tutorials, and team projects all provide the means by which preservation principles and practice can be introduced and reinforced in the community of your choice.

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